



BAKER'S DOZEN SELECTIONS

FRIENDSHIP MINI LESSONS

These friendship-themed Baker's Dozen selections are paired with engaging activities designed to help parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators enrich young learners' reading experiences while supporting the development of early reading comprehension skills. Each activity aligns with early childhood academic standards to ensure meaningful learning.

Bear with Me by Kerascoët

Random House Studio, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2023

The Concrete Garden by Bob Graham

Candlewick Press, 2023

You Go First by Ariel Bernstein, Illustrated by Marc Rosenthal

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Sloth Sleeps Over by Blythe Russo

Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2022

Brave as a Mouse by Nicolo Carozzi

Random House Studios, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2021

Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour

Dial Books /Penguin Young Readers Group, 2019

Fox + Chick: The Party and Other Stories by Sergio Ruzzier

Chronicle Books, 2018

I Want That Nut! by Madeline Valentine

Alfred A. Knopf, 2017

Bear and Squirrel are Friends...Yes, Really! by Deb Pilutti

Simon & Schuster, 2016

Chopsticks by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Hyperion Books for Children, 2012

City Dog, Country Frog by Mo Willems

Hyperion Books for Children, 2010

We Are in A Book! by Mo Willems

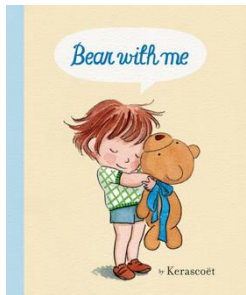
Hyperion Books for Children, 2010

Hi, Harry! The Moving Story of How One Slow Tortoise Slowly

Made a Friend by Martin Waddell

Candlewick Press, 2003

Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Academic Standards for English Language Arts: Grades PreK-5* (2014)
Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood: Kindergarten (2016)



Bear with Me
by Kerascoët

This almost wordless book uses the title phrase to illustrate the bond a child shares with their stuffed teddy bear. Since the very beginning, this duo has shared a daily routine and are rarely apart. Readers can relate to the feelings this little child has when facing the first day of school without bear. Their uncertainty at the start of the school day transitions to a story of resilience, as the child carries bear with them, not physically, but in their heart and through their actions. The thought of readers missing the opportunity to read a story filled with examples of love, bravery, and friendship is frankly, well, unBEARable.

CC.1.5.PK.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

CC.1.5.PK.B: Answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Tips for Using with Children

This storybook calls out for expressive reading, even though there are only three printed words in the book! For example, read the words “Bear With Me”—*loudly and tearfully* when the father takes Bear to the washer, with *great effort* when the child tries to fit Bear into the book bag, *proudly* when the child shows her painting, and *joyfully* when the child hugs Bear on returning home. Children who are beginning to read can notice that the size and design of letters as well as the punctuation help us decide how to read the words with expression. On re-reading, adults can point to the words and encourage children to read them dramatically.

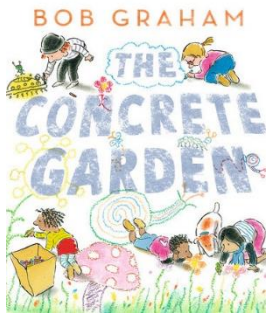
As a follow-up activity, invite children to bring a favorite item/toy for “show and tell,” perhaps one that they miss when they are at school, or maybe one that they, too, have had “forever.”

Tips for Using with Families

After examining the cover illustration, adults and children can notice that the first pages show a gift arriving for a new baby. Consider together whether that might be the bear and baby from the book's cover. If so, the child has probably loved this bear since infancy.

When reading this book with *younger children*, adults can point to each picture and use simple words to describe what's happening. This POINT AND TELL technique will help children's vocabulary grow. Children may want to “read” along with adults and label or describe some of the pictures themselves. Simply pointing and saying one word is a good start to becoming a reader.

Older children will be eager to examine the pictures more closely and answer questions about what's happening in them (e.g. “Oh! Oh! What do you think the Mommy is saying now?”) Help children relate the story to how they feel about their own favorite toys.



The Concrete Garden
by Bob Graham

Amanda and her mom make their way from their apartment on the fifteenth floor to the street below with a box filled with colorful chalk. Amanda not only begins to draw an image, but draws attention from other children, too, as they join and expand the artwork. Soon, the sidewalk is filled with palm trees, clouds, an alien invader, and much more, all overseen by a Queen of Swirls. Even the neighborhood dog takes creative license and adds to the drawing. A rain shower at the end of the day does not dampen the community spirit and creative collaboration. The watercolor illustrations are the perfect choice to highlight the blend of rain and chalk. In this garden, imagination and creativity bloom.

Tips for Using with Children

This is a story about children working together to brighten their world, and the lives of people around them. Relate this to the children's own lives, giving them examples of how they brighten the world for folks around them, e.g., by sharing their artwork, making greeting cards, giving friendly hellos, being kind and helpful.

This story easily inspires related projects. Children can create their own art by making a mural to display in a hallway or covered area where folks who pass by can admire it. They can also become scientists and engineers by experimenting with adding water drops to chalk drawings, or constructing boats from old boxes, and then testing them out in a water table.

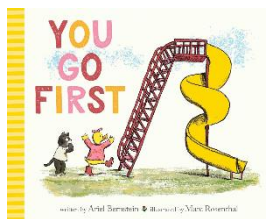
Tips for Using with Families

Families who are not city apartment dwellers, may want to preview the story by looking through the illustrations, talking with children about ways that Amanda's city living differs from theirs—concrete surrounding the building, laundry drying on balconies, and SO many nearby children to play with! While reading the story, adults can point out how the children's artwork brought cheer and happiness to the families in the building—and add, just as your child's artwork does for you!

After reading, adults can support children's imaginations by playing the game, "Where are you and What are you doing?" Turn to the double-page spread of the children's artwork. Then say, "Let's pretend that we live in that building and want to help make the picture." Take turns pointing to a spot in the picture where you would like to be, and tell what you would draw there, as well as the colors you would use. Your child might like playing this game with illustrations in other books as well.

CC.1.4.PK.X: Emerging to write routinely over short time frames. Engage in creative expression and exploration through art.

CC.1.2.PK.A: With prompting and support, retell key details of text that support a provided main idea.



You Go First
by Ariel Bernstein,
Illustrated by
Marc Rosenthal

Cat and Duck are great friends, and are excited to visit the playground together. When they notice a big, new, spiral slide, Duck is ready to try it out and Cat is not so sure. Duck listens carefully to Cat's cautions, and when a decision is finally made, Cat has some thoughtful moments about friendship. Colorful illustrations, expressive text, and a double-paged spread of the setting invite readers into the playground along with the characters. Readers will not be disappointed with how this story ends...weeeeeee promise!

CC.1.5.PK.B: Answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CC.1.5.PK.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Tips for Using with Children

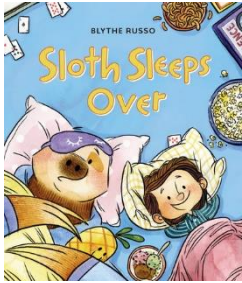
Some of the print in this book is a narration of the story; but much of it is dialogue between Duck and Cat. Point to the dialogue and speaker while reading with an expressive voice, making sure the children can see the characters and read their expressions and body language. Periodically ask children how Duck and Cat might be feeling.

As a follow up to this story, adults can talk to children about what made Duck and Cat such good friends, (e.g., friends know and understand how the other feels, friends are patient, friends take turns, when someone is afraid friends don't make fun, friends help you). Invite children to make pictures of people being good friends. Use those pictures to illustrate a class book or poster containing children's ideas for how to be a good friend.

Tips for Using with Families

This story's familiar setting gives families and children much to think and talk about. Adults and children can share times when they both have been confronted with a need to be brave. Where possible, adults can introduce ideas of how we decide about doing something we fear. For example, to be sure that the activity is safe, children can ask a trusted grown up or older sibling for advice. They can also watch others do the activity first, or even start by doing just a small part at a time.

This story also presents a good opportunity to point out individual differences in people. Some of us love to try out new things right away, while others need to take our time. Adults can point out that on the *Dedication Page*, the illustrator Marc Rosenthal declares that he is actually a "scaredy-cat!"



Sloth Sleeps Over

by Blythe Russo

Sloth could not be more excited to be invited to her very first sleepover at her human friend Paloma's house. She knows it will be successful because sloths love to sleep. To Sloth's surprise, however, she quickly realizes that Paloma plans to stay up all night. After an evening of pizza, ice cream, games, nail painting, and a spontaneous dance party, Sloth decides she must gather her nerve and be honest with her friend about how tired she is. With heavy eyelids, she is ready to tell Paloma... and finds her friend asleep! Readers who are looking for a book that has a sweet story of friendship, expressive characters, and vibrant watercolor illustrations will be excited to see that this book definitely doze. Does!

Tips for Using with Children

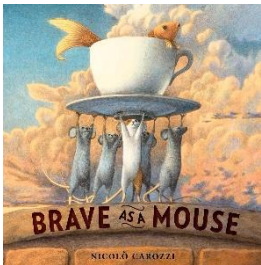
Reading can be a favorite part of a child's routine, whether at bedtime at home, or during a quiet part of their classroom daily routine. Adults can create a cozy space, just like Sloth and Paloma did, that can be used for reading. Parts of the story can be built into other transition times during the daily routine as well. For example, children can pretend they are Sloth and move slowly from place to place or turn down the lights and snuggle in at bedtime or naptime. During active parts of the day, plan a spontaneous dance party, where children can choose to alternate dancing like Paloma, or slowly and smoothly like Sloth.

Tips for Using with Families

Explaining the characteristics of sloths will help children understand why Sloth is so excited for the sleepover initially and why it becomes challenging once she is there. Adults can talk with children about sloth facts, including how they move slowly, love to swim, cannot see in bright light, and sleep upside down. So, do you think a sloth would like a sleepover? Pause during the story to ask children to look closely at each character's facial expressions. Can they guess how they might be feeling during each activity?

CC.1.2.PK.B: Answer questions about a text.

CC.3.1.PK.A: Explore characteristics of living things.



Brave as a Mouse

by Nicolo Carozzi

Inside a quiet house, a friendly mouse approaches a goldfish bowl and asks the fish inside to play. Together they enjoy the day, until three creeping cats threaten to put a stop to their fun. Determined to save the fish, the mouse leads the cats on a chase and secures some time to recruit some fellow mice and make a quick escape. The brave mice lead their new friend the fish to a safer home, avoiding "cat-astrophe."

Tips for Using with Children

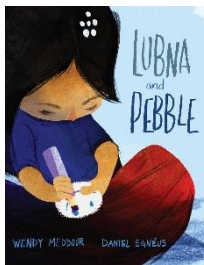
Shadow play is a fun activity that extends this story. Find a wall or surface where shadows can be seen, and use hands or cut out shapes to create shadows of the cats on the wall. Children might like to re-tell the story using the shadow puppets. The mice in the story had to use teamwork to help the fish escape. Looking back at the story, what different things did the mice do to help each other?

Tips for Using with Families

The pictures in this story help to build suspense and excitement for young readers. Adults can pause on each page and prompt children to look closely for shadows, figures, and other indications that the cats are nearby. Adults can ask children to predict what they think will happen next in the story. On the pages with the illustration of the pantry, how many mice do they see in the shadows? In what ways were the mice brave? Why did they want to help the fish?

CC.1.2.PK.B: Answer questions about a text.

CC.3.1.PK.B.6: Participate in simple investigations of physical characteristics of living things from same species to answer a question or to test a prediction.



Lubna and Pebble
by Wendy Meddour

When Lubna and her father arrive at a refugee settlement, Lubna finds comfort and friendship in a pebble she finds on the beach. She appreciates Pebble's company as it listens to her with its hand-drawn, yet warm, smile. When Lubna meets Amir, a younger boy who has arrived at the settlement, she enjoys his company, while still maintaining her strong connection with Pebble. The day Lubna and her father prepare to leave for a new home is bittersweet. As Lubna says farewell to Amir, she makes a decision to leave Pebble in his care, in hopes that it brings him the same comfort during his journey as it did for her. This quiet story with simple text and beautiful illustrations sends a powerful message about resilience, compassion, and friendship.

Tips for Using with Children

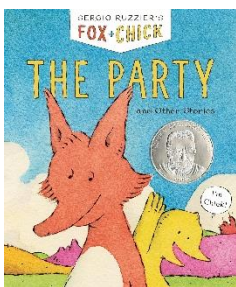
Daniel Egnéus' illustrations portray the physical and emotional hardships many refugees face as they leave their homelands to search for a better life. Children will empathize with Lubna's fears but will be encouraged to learn that her pet rock brings Lubna feelings of comfort and safety. Creating a pet rock or pebble is a fun activity for children, and discussion about this story can enhance children's experience. Adults can talk with children about ways to care for their pebble, as well as ways they can care for others. Children will enjoy using writing materials to create a pebble of their own, and adults can extend this activity by encouraging children in making positive message rocks for others. Children can decorate the rocks with a smile like Pebble, a picture, or a positive phrase. Children can decide to give their rock to a loved one or a person in need or, with the help of an adult, place them in the community for someone to discover. Adults can talk with children about how someone might feel when they receive or find the rock and about how Amir may have felt when Lubna shared Pebble with him.

Tips for Using with Families

Encourage adults to preview the story prior to reading with children by taking a picture walk. When focusing on text alone, a reader might miss aspects of the story revealed through the detailed illustrations. Adults can take time to observe each illustration and practice telling the story in their own words. What might they want to point out to children when reading? Lubna and Amir find comfort and security in Pebble. Ask adults if their child has a treasured belonging that he or she carries for comfort. Did reading Lubna's story provide insight into their own child's connection to this belonging?

CC.1.2.PK.C: With prompting and support, make connections between information in a text and personal experience.

CC.1.5.PK.C: Respond to what a speaker says to follow directions, seek help, or gather information.



Fox & Chick: The Party: and Other Stories
by Sergio Ruzzier

Fox and Chick, a pair of unlikely friends, embark on a series of adventures in this book, which is separated into three brief and entertaining chapters: The Party, Good Soup, and Sit Still. In each chapter, the two friends interact using a comic book panel format that is accessible and engaging to young readers. The humorous dialogue between the two characters will have readers wanting to read more. The two companions may not always see eye to eye, but their friendship rises above their differences.

Tips for Using with Children

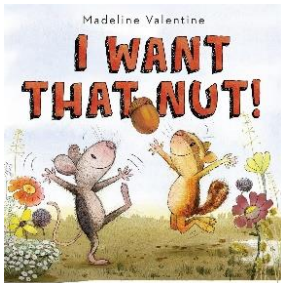
Because this is a chapter book, it presents an opportunity to prepare for reading longer books. Point out some of these characteristics prior to reading the story: Table of Contents, page numbers beside Chapter Titles, Title pages preceding each chapter. After reading one chapter, introduce the idea of using a bookmark to remember your place in a book. Children will enjoy making and decorating their own bookmarks. Encourage children to use them with books in the class library. They can mark where they stopped reading a story, or just mark a favorite page or picture that they want to return to. Of course, there is much to enjoy and talk about as you read these short, funny stories to children. And because Fox and Chick often misunderstand one another, these also become lessons in understanding another person's point of view. For example, in the first story, consider what "use" your bathroom meant to Fox vs. why Chick wanted to "use" the bathroom.

Tips for Using with Families

Take this opportunity to introduce your child to chapter books. On reading the book's title, emphasize the words "and other stories," pointing out that this book contains more than one story. Then turn to the Contents and read the titles of each of the chapters, pointing out the page numbers and the pictures beside them. As your child names the pictures, you might want to wonder together what those pictures might have to do with the stories. Show your child how to find where each story starts using the page numbers listed. If your child is still a beginning listener, read just one chapter at a time. You can start at the beginning or let your child decide which story to hear first. The chapters are short and always funny, providing a great way to build any child's attention span.

CC.1.1.K.B: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

CC.1.3.K.E: Recognize common types of text.



I Want That Nut!
by Madeline
Valentine

Readers will become attached to Mouse and Chipmunk the minute this book is opened. The combination of simple text, watercolor illustrations, and expressive faces and body language of both characters result in a wonderfully engaging tale of two friends and one nut. Both Mouse and Chipmunk cherish their time alone with the nut, which is often cut short by interference from the other. The decision of who will keep the nut is made near the end of the story, when a third character is introduced; and Mouse and Chipmunk discover that some things, like sharing and friendship, are more valuable than a nut.

Tips for Using with Children

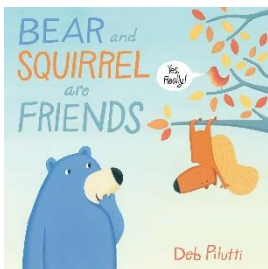
Talk with children about the activities that Mouse and Chipmunk do together or with the nut during the story. Examples include playing games, reading, cloud watching, having a tea party, and more. Create a written list of these activities that friends can do together and ask children to add other ideas to the list. This book also provides an opportunity to talk about sharing and turn-taking. Think about how the story might have been different if Mouse and Chipmunk had asked each other for a turn playing with the nut, or waited until the other was finished before starting to play. Playing board games together is also a great way to practice turn-taking while having fun together.

Tips for Using with Families

Families will find that there is so much to look at in this book. The expressions and body language of the characters are perfect complements to the text. Before reading the story with children, adults may want to walk through the pages, giving attention to the speech bubbles. Speech bubbles can be a fun vehicle for children and adults alike to interact with the characters in a book and understand what they may be feeling. Because the illustrations contribute to a deeper understanding of the characters as well, adults can pause after reading the text on each page to allow children to look at the illustrations.

CC.1.5.PK.E: Use simple sentences; express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, speaking clearly enough to be understood by most audiences.

CC.16.2.PK.D: Recognize that conflict occurs and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate ways to resolve conflict.



*Bear and Squirrel
are Friends...Yes,
Really!*
by Deb Pilutti

Bear and Squirrel are good friends. They like to share food, play games, and help each other out. Squirrel sweeps Bear's den with his tail and Bear shakes trees so that Squirrel can collect acorns. But Squirrel's friends remind him that bears eat squirrels, and Bear's friends remind him that squirrel can be a tasty snack. When Bear hibernates in winter, Squirrel patiently knits while he waits for Bear to wake up. When spring arrives, Bear thinks Squirrel looks different. He thinks Squirrel looks delicious! In a few humorous, tense moments, Squirrel gulps and disappears from the page. The funny ending restores the reader's faith in true friendship.

Tips for Using with Children

All friends have things in common, but also things that are unique. After reading the story, list/chart the ways Squirrel and Bear are different (e.g. one is tall and can shake tree branches; one has a bushy tail that can be used to clean) and ways they are alike (e.g. they both like to play games). To extend this activity, invite children to think of a good friend or family member and talk about ways that they are similar and the ways they are unique to that person.

Tips for Using with Families

Explain to families that this book can help listeners focus on visual literacy as well as writing/drawing. Point out the thought bubbles, asking children to tell what the characters are thinking. Then suggest a writing/drawing activity in which children draw thought bubbles. Share these projects with other family members, asking them to "read" the thought bubbles. An enrichment activity for families would be to play "name that song" together just as Squirrel and Bear do in the story. Adults and children take turns singing or humming a song, and the other tries to guess.

CC.1.3 PK.E: With prompting and support, recognize common types of text.

CC.16.2.PK.B: Identify similarities and differences between self and others.



Chopsticks
by Amy Krouse
Rosenthal

In this charming companion book to *Spoon* (2010), Chopsticks are best friends. They go everywhere and do everything together. While learning new tricks, the tip of Chopstick's leg is snapped apart. He is "whisked away," glued, and bandaged back together, but he must stay off of it while it sets. Through the recuperation period, the two chopsticks learn lessons about friendship and that being apart can make their friendship even stronger.

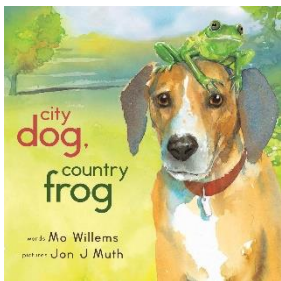
Tips for Using with Children

Provide children with a variety of plastic kitchen utensils and googly eyes to create puppet performances that will help them retell the story and give them the opportunity to create their own friendship stories.

Tips for Using with Families

The Chopsticks learn that a variety of activities can be fun on their own as well as together. This story's theme lends itself to a parent discussion of how to encourage children to play productively alone. Talk about the kinds of activities, places, and situations that lend themselves to solitary play. Remind parents of the value of independent play.

CC.1.4.PK.W: With guidance and support, recall information from experiences or books.



**City Dog,
Country Frog**
by Mo Willems

City Dog and Country Frog meet for the first time in the spring, and they play Country Frog games. In the summer, they play City Dog games. By Fall, Frog is too tired out, and the pals simply recall their past fun. Sadly, Country Frog does not return in the winter. However, City Dog discovers friendship again in the spring. The beautiful, expressive watercolors enhance the action and give insight into a range of feelings that children will want to discuss. They will return to their favorite pictures and want to hear the book numerous times. .

Tips for Using with Children

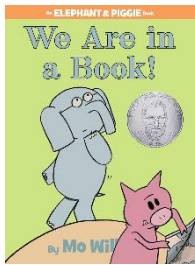
Children will love the pictures in this book, especially if some of the details are pointed out to them (e.g., Country Frog throwing the stick for City Dog to fetch, Country Frog holding the leaf umbrella for City Dog, City Dog waiting for his friend, and City Dog giving his froggy smile). This is a great book for children to choose their favorite picture and tell why they like it. Before reading, children could be asked what it is like in the country and in the city. Show them pictures of both places and sort them by laying them out in two columns or two circles. This book can also be used to talk about hibernation, the life cycles of animals, and the seasons of the year.

Tips for Using with Families

Talk to families about the fact that this book will spark emotions in children. They will enjoy the friendship of the dog and frog, and they will feel sad that the frog does not come back. Children and parents can discuss possible reasons that the frog did not return. Children may want to relate times that they have experienced a loss. Explain to parents that the ending is so important in that the dog found a new friend, but still had a part of his old friend with him when he gave his "froggy smile" and used the frog's words.

CC.1.2.PK.C: With prompting and support, make connections between information in a text and personal experience.

CC.1.5.PK.E: Use simple sentences; express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, speaking clearly enough to be understood by most audiences.



Lubna and Pebble
by Wendy Meddour

In the newest adventure of Elephant and Piggie, these hilarious best friends find themselves literally stuck in the pages of a book! The story, told in word bubbles, follows the comical exchange between Gerald and Piggie as they explore the parts of a book and get the reader to say funny words like "BANANA." However, what will happen when the book ends? The pair figures out a plan that will make this book a hard one to put down. Visit [Mo Willems' website](#) for this list of books as well as games and other activities that children will enjoy.

Tips for Using with Children

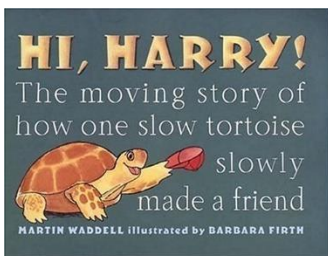
This book is one of a series about Elephant and Piggie. Gather as many of the books as you can and talk about what a series is. Give children an opportunity to read/listen to the stories. This would be a good activity for reading partners. Invite children to share the books they enjoyed. Visit [Mo Willems' website](#).

Tips for Using with Families

Point out to families that this story is told through "speech bubbles" and simple text. After reading the story to children once or twice, let children help read the book. Show children that Gerald (the elephant) has gray speech bubbles and Piggie has pink ones to match their skin colors. Have the child choose a character to read, with the parent being the other character. Beginning readers can read the actual words, while younger children can come up with their own to recall what happens in the story. The colored bubbles will help children know when it is their character's turn to speak.

CC.1.3.K.K: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

CC.1.5.PK.D: Use simple sentences; share stories, familiar experiences, and interests, speaking clearly enough to be understood by most audiences.



Hi, Harry! The Moving Story of How One Slow Tortoise Slowly Made a Friend
by Martin Waddell

Harry is a very, very slow tortoise who wants to find a friend, but everyone else is too fast. Slowly, slowly, Harry sets out to find a friend who has time to play with a tortoise. The ink and watercolor pictures give a sense of gentle movement that will take young listeners along Harry's meandering journey to look for the perfect friend.

Tips for Using with Children

Harry's hopeful persistence makes for a great read-aloud book on the pleasures of friendship. Ask children, "What makes a good friend?" "What are some things they do that make them a good friend to others?" Review the story by asking, "Why did snail make a good friend for Harry?"

Tips for Using with Families

Help families understand how to talk about friendship with their children. As children enter preschool and other social settings, they may discover that they do not want to be friends with everyone. Explain to parents that they should tell their child it's okay if they are not friends with every person, but they must respect and be kind to everyone. Connect this idea with the story. Some animals didn't make the best friends for Harry and others were just right..

CC.16.2.PK.A: Interact with peers and adults in a socially acceptable manner.

CC.1.6.PK.A: Engage in independent and group activities to develop social relationships.